

## Proposal for Program Review and Discontinuation

Program review must, over the next couple of years, become a continuous exercise, not just a reaction to financial stringency. Getting to that point will require a common understanding of criteria and outcomes that support the university's mission and that will position the university to be more competitive among regional institutions and to establish a distinctive reputation based on quality, student-focused outcomes, and access. I have identified proposed criteria below. Academic Affairs is prioritizing working toward these ends over this academic year.

Meanwhile, we have obligations to meet the expectations set out by the Board of Trustees in the FY21 Budget. These are to address a financial gap of \$16M within Academic Affairs. Doing so simply through budget reduction, no matter how thoughtful, would leave the institution weak and divided. Addressing this charge through a combination of strategies, can help us avoid rash decisions and at least consider, if not avoid, unintended consequences.

This will be a multi-year process. As stated in Academic Policy 303-35, "All proposals must specify mechanisms to protect the interests of students currently enrolled in such programs and to allow those students to complete their degrees in a reasonable time period." At the same time, these are an initial cut at strategies that we will need to adapt to changing circumstances, enrollment shifts, and level of savings achieved.

The Board and President May will continue to monitor external and internal contributors to financial projections and determine if this target should be altered and in what direction. We can adjust to any such changes, but no changes will eliminate the need for continuous evaluation and reductions in expenses. EWU's enrollment was declining before the COVID environment, particularly in a number of programs. Our resources in Academic Affairs are spread too thin to provide the investment needed to grow or launch new programs.

### Strategies

- I. Address efficiencies identified in the EAB analysis. See Academic Efficiencies below **\$2-4M**
  
- II.
  - A. Review identified programs/majors that have lost enrollment, suffer high attrition rates, appear unable to attract students relative to regional competition, or exhibit significantly higher cost per student FTE (or SCH) than comparable programs at comparable universities. Determine if the university should maintain or discontinue these programs in their present configuration. **\$4-5M**
  
  - B. AP303-35 provides for a separate process for program/course consolidation or revision. In that policy, the students are protected with the following language: "Proposals for consolidating options within a given degree that allow the students to still obtain the same or a comparable degree are not included in this process but follow the normal program revision process." It is my intent to work with deans, chairs, and faculty to address the potential consolidations and revisions identified below. **\$0.5M**

- III. Identify existing, revised or new programs with significant growth potential and determine investment strategies to achieve quality learning outcomes and enrollment/revenue growth in those programs. **\$5M**
- IV. Determine the benefits of moving existing or new programs onto on-line or hybrid delivery modes, particularly at the graduate level. At the same time, avoid maintaining duplicate campus-based programs where doing so competes with our own online program. Self-support programs should bear their full costs plus sharing any additional revenue, including salary and benefit costs. **\$5M**
- V. Assess and reduce other academic costs. Among them may be the costs of maintaining multiple academic calendars, disciplinary accreditations not required for licensing or practice, administrative expenses, costs of internal decision-making, and those associated with the “efficiencies” in (I) above. **\$0.8M**

## **I. Academic Efficiencies**

The efficiency assessment portion of the report from EAB focused on three areas of opportunity: collapsing underfilled sections, scheduling small classes less frequently and increasing the total teaching effort of full-time faculty. EAB was asked to identify opportunities for budget savings. Their goal in analyzing the efficiency of EWU’s academic operations was not to document thoroughly what we currently do but to show how we might approach what we do more efficiently. There is value in taking seriously their analysis, even if elements of imprecision in it result in a more modest total budgetary savings than the \$3.4 million they have estimated.

### **Collapsing Underfilled Sections**

Not all underfilled sections can be collapsed. We use the same course number, for example, for multiple sections of a physical education activity course or a music lesson course, each with different instructional content. It is also true that unless the data analysis accounts for crosslisting, the report may indicate that we are running more under-enrolled sections than we really are because it doesn’t recognize multiple under-enrolled sections meeting together.

Nonetheless, there is room for improved efficiency in our course offerings. The EAB analysis draws our attention very clearly to a central fact about academic budgets: the cost is in the sections. If we can serve the same number of students in fewer sections, we cut cost without affecting revenue. And if enrollment is declining, reducing costs (cutting sections) is not only desirable but imperative because revenue is declining.

Directly related is the topic of course capacity. The EWU-UFE CBA allows for a wide range of size limits on course sections, according to course level and mode of instruction. In an environment of decreasing enrollment, some departments may find that a course previously scheduled in four or five sections per academic year may accommodate current demand with only three or four sections, especially if the cap is raised by five or 10 students per section. In an environment of reduced demand, every section cut in this manner adds up to savings that can have significant institutional budget impact.

### **Scheduling Small Classes Less Frequently**

Unlike the relatively high-demand courses in the previous section, some courses remain under-enrolled even when offered only once per academic year. In those cases, switching to

an alternating-year schedule can increase efficiency. If an alternating-year schedule still leaves a course under-enrolled, the viability of the course or the curriculum it fulfills comes into question. If a major offers so many options for specialization that each pool of majors divides too much to ensure sufficient enrollment by section, then streamlining the curriculum to create fewer, wider pathways can increase efficiency.

### **Increasing Actual Teaching Credits**

The EAB report attempts to quantify how much additional annual instructional cost results from having full-time faculty not teaching full instructional credit loads by counting all credits offered in an academic year and comparing that total with annual theoretical teaching capacity. For the latter figure, the report counts each tenured or probationary faculty and each special faculty (lecturer or senior lecturer) as theoretically able to teach 36 or 45 credits, respectively. Practically, not all of those workload credits can be recovered: contractual and accreditation obligations, for example, require reassigned effort for administrative work by department chairs and program directors. Further, not all credits are equal: certain courses, because of contact-hour considerations, count as more workload credit than their face-value credit. Also, tenured or probationary and special faculty in semester programs have annual workloads of 24 and 30 (semester) credits, respectively, not 36 and 45 (quarter) credits.

Despite these concerns, the fact remains that any redirection of faculty effort away from credit-bearing instruction involves a cost. While there are benefits to that reassigned effort, such as accomplishing necessary administrative work, the report focuses our attention on the question of exactly this cost/benefit analysis. A tenured faculty member with an academic year salary of \$75,000 earns \$1,667 per workload credit, or at roughly 1,500 hours of full-time work for nine months, about \$50 per hour, not including benefits. Departments need to remain conscious of the cost of reassigning credits for administrative tasks, especially if the work can be accomplished by staff members at a lower rate of pay. This analysis applies to courses with negotiated workload credit based on contact hours as well. If a low-cost lab or studio technician can perform work that is now counted as high-cost faculty workload, we should assign that work accordingly and reserve the faculty effort for credit-based instruction

In all, accounting for the lack of nuance in the EAB report, I find that efficiency measures must be a significant element of our budgetary strategy going forward. Through a combination of efforts resulting in reduced costs without reducing service to our student population, we should aim for not the overly ambitious goal of \$3.4 million identified in the EAB report, but the more modest target of \$2 to \$3 million per year over the next couple of years. The more we can save through these measures, the less we will need to affect programs and individuals.

**II. A. Program Discontinuation:** I recommend that the following programs be analyzed for feasibility of continuation, continuation with significant change, or discontinuation in their present configuration.

**Rationale:** Adjustment of expenses to revenue, particularly Ledger 1 revenue, is the overriding rationale for this proposal. A more continuous assessment process will allow us greater concentration on qualitative factors going forward. That will give programs the opportunity to address enrollment, student success, or competitiveness indicators. This proposal, however, must rely on largely quantitative factors that affect the economy of the

university. I have noted below more specific reasons for including programs/majors in this proposal for PRC review. In arriving at this proposal, I used EAB data, APS, and Tripwire analysis to compare and contrast numbers. Additionally, I considered GSA request data and its financial considerations. I included consideration of Fall 2020 major counts (primary and secondary majors) and I consulted with the deans of CALE, STEM, CSS/COB, and CHSPH. (DP = Degree Program Discontinuation; DP+D = Degree Program and Department Discontinuation)

#### CALE

- Art History BA – low demand/enrollment DP
- Business and Marketing Education BAE– 0 or 1 major for multiple years DP
- Humanities BA– low enrollment DP
- Journalism BA– low enrollment DP
- Music – all of the following are DP based on low enrollment
  - Music / Instrumental Performance / BM
  - Music / Jazz Pedagogy / MM
  - Music / Jazz Performance / BM
  - Music / Liberal Arts / BA
  - Music / MA
  - Music / MM
  - Music / Music Composition / BM
  - Music / Music Education / MM
  - Music / Performance / MM
  - Music / Piano Performance / BM
  - Music / Vocal Performance / BM
  - Music: Instrument, Choral, Gen / BME
  - Musical Theatre / BA
- Visual Arts Education BAE– low enrollment DP

#### CHSPH

- Health Services Administration BA– declines in enrollment, high attrition rate, high cost per SCH. DP+D (HSAD is a “program” but treated budgetarily as a “department”)
- Outdoor Recreation BA and Outdoor Recreation Leadership BA – low enrollment DP
- Recreation and Tourism Management BA – low enrollment DP
- Therapeutic Recreation BA– multi-year enrollment decline DP
- Athletic Training MS DP
- Public Health BS DP

#### COB

- Supply Chain/Operations Management BAB– low enrollment DP

#### CSS

- Communication Studies MS - low enrollment relative to cost. DP
- Economics – BA, BS – low enrollment DP
- History MA – low enrollment DP
- GW&SS BA – low enrollment DP

## CSTEM

- Manufacturing Technology – low enrollment DP
- Physics – (BA/BS) low enrollment, few graduates DP

**II. B. Consolidation and Program Revision:** AP 303-35 provides for program revision. “Proposals for consolidating options within a given degree that allow the students to still obtain the same or a comparable degree are not included in this process [of program discontinuation, BLS] but follow the normal program revision process.

- Journalism BS (Public Relations) – consolidate with CMST BA Public Relations
- Multiple programs with low to medium enrollments in data science, health informatics, MIS, business analytics, data analytics. Explore a common core with more clearly defined and highly attractive degrees.
- Visual Arts Education/Secondary BAE – excessive credit requirement. Revision.
- Chemistry/Biochem/Physics – Multiple undergraduate Chem degrees with low enrollment. Consolidation.
- Geography BA-low enrollment. To proceed with consolidation as proposed.
- Chemistry – BA General, BS, BS Forensic Science – low enrollment. Consolidate.

**Graduate Programs:** There remain a number of questions related to graduate programs that require additional information. The way we currently fund PTOL and GSA costs may result in a more expensive institutional approach than alternatives. Many programs are also currently considering or in the process of transitioning to different delivery options. I have not been able to capture these nuances in my short run-up to preparing this proposal. I will work with the deans, the graduate school and PRC/GAC to better understand them and achieve more informed recommendations to the president in May 2021.

Many of these programs as well as others not included in this call for review contribute well beyond their majors. Some through general education, others by maintaining courses in service of diversity, equity and inclusion. Graduate programs are often directly linked with undergraduate course availability. Many provide foundation courses for multiple other majors. And some with independent BA/BS degrees also share those courses with considerable numbers of students seeking BAE degrees in subject areas. These are factors that will need to be teased out through consultation and dialogue moving forward both through the PRC and within Academic Affairs.

### **Criteria for Success Going Forward**

The question of qualitative criteria has often been raised in the face of quantitative data. Those criteria are clear in the University Strategic Plan core themes and calls to action. Not every “comprehensive” regional university has or should have identical arrays of programs. Eastern has certainly evolved clusters of very popular, professional programs that increasingly define the university. But we remain comprehensive in nature. So, our distinctiveness, aside from specific program reputation, needs to be based more on our across-the-board outcomes for students in every field of study.

ACCESS, LEARNING AND COMPLETION: Achieving distinction for outcomes as a university means that every program is also achieving outcomes defining student success. Every program must see its role in contributing to achieving institutional goals related to:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Graduation
- Time to degree
- Transfer effectiveness (seamless transition of credits/ pathways)
- Student paid work/internship opportunities

SUSTAINABILITY: We cannot provide access and quality without resources. Within our academic enterprise, we can achieve savings, particularly by focusing on curriculum. Courses and sections are what drive costs. Achieving efficiencies, particularly in curriculum will require collaboration. Among these collaborations are:

- Cross-listing courses
- Shared core curricula
- Curricular efficiency
- 3/2 master's degrees
- Innovating interdisciplinary programs to bring student learning up to current demands on our graduates.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, a “stewardship of place” is an advantage that regional universities have over their state flagship counterparts. It is also an important component of creating opportunities for student experiential learning and connections to regionally based first jobs and careers. Local support for regional institution priorities is also a critical component of successful pursuit of state and philanthropic support. This is a clear message in the Strategic Plan. Among the keys to success in this area are:

- Faculty External Service prioritized over intramural service
- Community-engaged research
- Student engagement, experiential learning, internships
- Curricular engagement with the region
- Employer/Agency/Institution educational services contracts

Every program should be able to demonstrate its connections to our region and its population and incorporate engagement, service learning, community presence and diversity/equity/inclusion in its curriculum.

These are all values that derive from the current Strategic Plan and from the lived mission of Eastern Washington University.

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